III. DELAWARE SOCIOLOGY

As is true of all people on a comparable technological level, Delaware social organization was based upon ties of kinship. Or to put it another way, the organization by which the technology was operated and the ways in which individuals behaved toward one another were regulated and determined by ties of relationship. But "the records of departed civilizations, archeological and documentary, are relatively rich in evidences as to technology, economics, religion, and government but poor in information as to rules of descent, kinship terminology, and other aspects of social organization."[1] This general condition is true of early Delaware culture, but if reliance is placed upon Murdock's suggestions, it is possible to move from the documentarily known to the deductive probable and to reconstruct with some success the early kinship structure.

Life Cycle

Pregnancy and Birth

Marital abstinence was practiced during pregnancy.[2] Heckewelder stated that husbands were solicitous of the whims of their wives during pregnancy, citing a case in which a man traveled at least forty miles to obtain cranberries with which "to satisfy his wife's longings."[3] During pregnancy meat was not touched with the hands, but was eaten with a stick.[4] One of my informants (J.T.) said that bird and animal livers could not be eaten during pregnancy. This may well be a vestige of the early taboo on meat. According to Harrington's Munsi informants:

> The husband of an expectant mother was often accompanied on his hunting trips by the spirit of the unborn child, whose romping and playing about the bushes, invisible to mortal eye, would nevertheless frighten away the deer and send the hunter home empty-handed. To prevent this a little bow and arrow were made and attached to the prospective father's garments, in the hope that the little spirit would play with them and stay quietly with his parent. Should this precaution fail, the child was thought to be a girl, and a little corn mortar and pestle were substituted. . . .[5]

Birth, which was reported to be easy,[6] seems to have taken place away from the village, either in a menstrual hut or simply out of doors. Mary Jemison (a white captive of the eighteenth century, married at one time

[1] Murdock, 1949, p. 323.
[2] Thomas, 1912, p. 335; Penn, 1912, p. 232; Holm, 1834, p. 126.
[3] Heckewelder, 1881, p. 159.
[4] Holm, 1834, p. 126.
[5] Harrington, 1913, p. 212.
[6] Holm, 1834, p. 126.

2;Newcomb E-4, 5 (1951-1952) 1956
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to a Delaware) gave birth in a small "shed" on a riverbank, attended by two women.[7] Informants said that old experienced women who had gone through childbirth themselves assisted in delivering a woman. Immediately after birth the infant was washed by its mother.[8] Lindestrom alone among the early sources said:

> When the savage females bear their children, they tie around their waists a snake skin of the most poisonous kind of snakes, which are found in New Sweden and are called rattlesnakes, which has such an effect that they do not know of the least pain in their child birth, and are as healthy in an hour, as if they had never been through it.[9]

Immediately after the child was washed it was placed upon a cradleboard. Lindestrom said:

> [The mother] binds it . . . with three long and broad braids, and does not place the smallest particle of clothing under or above the child. The first braid she wraps over the forehead and around the board; the second braid, right over the arms and the board; the third braid, right over the knees and the board, tying it right strongly to the board.[10]

The child was kept bound to the cradleboard most of the time, including nursing periods, until it could walk.[11] Moss was used as an agent to absorb the child's excreta.[12] If it was necessary to carry the child after the cradleboard had been discarded, he was borne on the mother's back wrapped in a blanket.[13]

Harrington was told that a newborn child was not felt to be securely in the world, and that to ensure life it was disguised from the supernatural beings by being attired in adult clothing. According to Harrington:

> . . . deerskin strings or strips of corn-husk were tied on the wrists of children so that the ghosts would think they were tied fast to the earth; and holes were cut in their little moccasins so that they could not follow the spirit trail. If the child's mother died shortly after its birth, these precautions were redoubled.[14]

The umbilical cord was specially treated; it was buried in the woods if a boy's, and near the lodge if a girl's. It was considered to be closely connected with a child's disposition, and hence if buried in the woods would ensure a boy's liking for the woods and the hunt; if buried near a lodge it would ensure the girl's attachment to womanly occupations.[15]

Naming.— Personal names were bestowed upon children or announced to the public during religious ceremonials, particularly the Big House Ceremony.[16] The meager information derived from the seventeenth-century sources indicates that these names were not given the children

[7] Jemison, 1918, p. 45.
[8] Penn, 1912, p. 231; Penn, 1882, p. 342; Holm, 1834, p. 126; O.A., M.B.
[9] Lindestrom, 1925, p. 194.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[11] Penn, 1912, p. 231; Pastorius, 1912, p. 434; Lindestrom, 1925, p. 201; Trowbridge MS.
[12] Loskiel, 1794, p. 61.
[13] Lindestrom, 1925, p. 201.
[14] Harrington, 1913, p. 212; J.T. mentioned defacing moccasins for this purpose.
[15] Harrington, 1913, pp. 212-13.
[16] Zeisberger, 1910, p. 80; Loskiel, 1794, p. 62; Harrington, 1913, p. 213; Kinietz, 1946, p. 44; O.A., M.B.

3;Zeisberger M-5 (1767-1780)1910
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among the Indians as long as there were no Indian wars. Through the examples of the traders, also the Indians acquired the habit of drinking to excess. Secondly, the Indians had formerly great respect for the aged and the chiefs, from whom they learned that unfaithfulness in the marriage relationship was a great crime and that whoever was guilty of such evil would live neither long nor happily. At the present time they show little reverence to the aged and each one thinks himself to be wise in his own conceits.

The Indian women are in general of a very strong bodily constitution. There are generally clever and experienced women enough who are able to give assistance and advice in time of labor; generally, women will remain in the house at this time. Some go into the woods by themselves and bring their children to the house when they have seen the light of day. Most mothers nurse their children until they are two or more years old. During this time many husbands have concubines, though not in the house.

If it is left to the mother to give the child a name, she uses little ceremony and calls it after some peculiar mark or character in it, for instance the Beautiful, the Good Child, the Great-Eye, sometimes giving it a name of unsavory meaning. If the father gives the child a name he pretends that it has been suggested to him in a dream. The name is given at a sacrifice, on which occasion the Indian brings to some aged person, who performs the offering, a string of wampum, and tells him that he wishes ~~his~~ child's name to be named thus and so. During the sacrifice some other person sings a song in Indian fashion at a public gathering and makes known the child's name. This is called praying over the child. The same ceremony is performed when an adult person receives a name, even although he may already have been named. It is not common to call an adult by his name, for they are ashamed of their own names. If the attention of any one is to be attracted it is done in some other fashion than by the use of the name. In case of children, the names are used. In assemblies and in discourses they do not use the name of any one who is present, though absent persons are referred to by their names.

3:Zeisberger M-5 (1767-1780)1910
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Iroquois NM9

Disease.	Herb.	Remarks.
Hemorrhage	Powder of puff-ball (*Lycoperdon bovista*) pulverized charcoal.	
Wounds	Washed with decoction of lichen, bass-wood or slippery elm.	Great care was given to keeping up the suppurating process and keeping wounds open.
Ulcers	*Acorus calamus* and cautery.	
Salt Rheum	*Rumex crispus* or yellow dock.	
Phlegmon	Onion poltices.	
Gonorrhoea	Various species of genus Pinus.	The balsaam used in modern remedies.
Syphilis	Local applications as for ulcers.	
Paralysis	None.	
Obstetrics:	*Sanguinaria canadensis* (blood-root) used to facilitate parturition.	

31. Stings of poisonous reptiles were treated variously by the different tribes. The Senecas used a plant called *Polygala senega;* others used *Liatris spicata, Asclepias tuberosa, Prenanthus alba, Fraxinus juglandifolia,* and many applied locally *Alisma plantago.* Scientists are today studying, for perhaps the first time, the action of various forms of venom and the appropriate remedies for each. The poison of the rattler destroys the tissues and blood-cells; that of the cobra paralyzes the nervous system. See Dr. J. T. Case, *Good Health,* June, 1909.

32. Heckewelder distinguishes between "good" and "bad" medicinemen, terming the former "physicians and surgeons" and the latter "doctors or jugglers," but states of these latter, "I am sorry that truth obliges me to confess, that in their profession they rank above the honest practitioners." One whimsical conceit of the Indian doctor which well illustrates their superstition and "science" was that the water used to concoct an emetic must be dipped from a stream *against* the current, while for a cathartic it must be dipped *with* the current. Heckewelder, suffering from a painful felon, was put at ease within half an hour by an Indian woman who applied a poultice made from the root of the common blue violet. Heckewelder, *History,* 217-225.

33. It would seem here that male practitioners were called to attend labor cases. Dr. Pitcher has asserted that, to his knowledge, only

3:Zeisberger M-5 (1767-1780)1910
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women officiated under such circumstances, Schoolcraft *History*, Pt. IV, 515. Loskiel refers to the efficiency of female doctors in child-birth. *History*, 110.

34. These primitive Turkish baths were, unquestionably, a great means of health to this race which suffered so largely from colds. Dr. McClure, who gives an interesting description of a sweating oven on the Muskingum, asserts, however, that to pulmonary disorders and small pox, the treatment was quite fatal. *Diary*, 67.

35. The Unamis, the chief tribe of the Delawares, lived on the Tuscarawas River. [131]

36. The Unalochtgos, the tribe of second importance, lived beside the Tuscarawas.

37. The Monseys lived mostly on the Big Beaver River.

38. Orange Co., N. Y.

39. It is refreshing, in the face of so many idealistic accounts of primitive Indian life to read these blunt, plain statements of facts from Zeisberger's pen. We probably know more accurately concerning the Six Nations than of any other Indians. One of the earliest reports claims that De Nonville's soldiers in 1687 destroyed a million and a quarter bushels of corn in four Seneca villages. And yet we know that the eating of children in time of utter famine was known among the Senecas — Cadwallader Colden, *History of the Five Indian Nations* (1755) II, 8. If such destitution could exist in a region exceedingly well watered and fertile, what of Indians not so fortunately placed?

40. Bracket fungus.

41. Remains of the Mound-building Indians. These were found on the site of at least one of the Moravian Mission towns, Lichtenau. De Schweinitz, *Life of Zeisberger*, 433, 436 *Note*.

42. Unquestionably a European idea; no mounds in the Middle West were high enough to serve the purpose of rolling blocks or stones. The greater part of the mounds so far opened prove to have been raised over charnel houses after the latter had been filled with bodies.

43. These facts concerning the wooden wampum and the substitute for wampum are of utmost interest.

44. Allegheny River.

45. Neville's Island? This is clearly, the Delaware tradition.

46. Tennessee River, commonly known in early days as the Cherokee River. See A. B. Hulbert's, "Washington's Tour to the Ohio," *Ohio State Arch. and Hist. Quart.* XVII, (Oct. 1908), 484.

46½. At the Treaty of Fort Stanwix?

47. Here begins Zeisberger's version of the legend of the conquest of the Iroquois over the Delawares, one of the famous Indian legends. It is possible that this Zeisberger account is the original English (German) version upon which so many versions have been based. Heckewelder (*History* 11) referring to the source of his information. 114

nature of the disease. The flesh of animals and fowl is excluded from the diet and in the case of fever, red or fox squirrel flesh is not eaten. This food taboo is known to the Delaware by a native word meaning "makes you sick." Corn hominy, however, is administered in most cases, as it is considered to be a nourishing food.

In the case of childbirth, salt is not eaten for ten days. Onions are given the mother to produce milk, but care must be taken not to use a quantity such as to cause nausea for the child and mother.

During the catamenial period a woman is not allowed to prepared food nor taken an active part in domestic affairs.[33] The separate dishes assigned to her at that time, may only be used by her husband. Food cooked by such a woman would produce tuberculosis in others in a short time. A term translated as "gives dirty food," is applied to such a practice and refers to the resultant poisonous effects. During her periodic isolation a woman herbalist must refrain from preparing remedies or participating in any of the ceremonies.

Divinatory Curing Practices

Certain acts of a divinatory nature are performed upon selection and preparation of plants, roots, and bark employed in making medicine. Only plants that are clean and well developed, with the roots free from knotty growths, are taken. When seeking bark, the medicine gatherer selects a sturdy, well-formed tree for the purpose. The bark growing on the east side of a tree is preferred for its greater strength-giving properties received from the morning sun.

In gathering medicinal supplies, the materials are inspected for a clue as to the course of the treatment. Thus, if roots appear rough and knotty, the patient will be difficult to cure; if clean and well-formed, it will be an easy task to restore his health. Another practice is to place some crushed leaves or roots in running water. If the substance sinks to the bottom of the stream, the patient for whom it is prepared, will die; if it floats, a speedy recovery is assured.

When all other remedies have failed, an emergency medicine is sometimes made from scrapings of deer antler. During its preparation a prayer is offered to the animal from which the antler was obtained. Wi·tapanóxwe related an incident in which a trial was made by means

[33] The puberty ceremony for young girls and the periodic isolation of women is described by Zeisberger, *ibid*, pp. 73-77.

4:Tantaquidgeon E-5 (1930) 1942
NM7 Delaware NM7

The Dog as a Vicar of Children

231 751 854 Upon the birth of a Delaware child, it was given a pet [16] to serve as the guardian of its health. If there was sickness about, the Delaware believed that it would be visited upon the dog instead of its little master. The animal was thought to say, "I am only a dog, the child is more precious." A small bag containing charcoal was tied around the pet animal's neck by the child's parents. Frequently they would talk to the dog. If the animal died, it was buried and the child given another pet. However, if the child fell sick and died, a release ceremony was performed [17] by placing a string of wampum about its neck, thus freeing the animal.[18]

Notes on Pregnancy and Child-birth

843 262 784 The prospective mother is advised to eat sparingly. Sour foods should not be eaten during the final stage of pregnancy as they are believed to cause contraction of the muscles. Onions and cabbage are also excluded from the diet. Salt is forbidden both before and after pregnancy, as it is thought to stop the flow of blood. Lifting heavy objects should be avoided during pregnancy and for a period of a month after delivery. A pregnant woman should not gaze at a deformed person or make fun of him, as it might affect her child. Care is also taken to avoid being frightened by dogs and other animals.

844 The woman is usually attended by a midwife who is given gifts of calico, tobacco, etc., from the woman's husband. To women over thirty years of age, a special medicine is given to shorten the period of labor.[19] The delivery is made in a kneeling position. Immediately after, a tea made from "pleurisy root" is administered. The navel cord is cut off about one and a half inches from the body. A piece of lead about two inches in diameter is bound to the body over the navel by a cloth. This bandage is kept in place until healing is complete, to avoid protrusion of the navel.

845 In case of still-birth, special treatment is given the mother. Still-birth is believed due to the child being hurt. "The child-killing sickness of women is hard to overcome." Twins are believed to have been con-

[16] Known by a term meaning "pet given child."

[17] See also p. 67 for release of a bear.

[18] As dictated by Wi·tapanóxwe.

[19] "The women know of certain medicines," according to Zeisberger (*op. cit.*, p. 56), "which usually act quickly in case of hard labor, which sometimes occurs, though not frequently."

302 also considered a mark of beauty (Lindstrom, pp. 193, 194, and 196; Pastorius, 1698, p. 433).

The Delaware women had the distinctive custom of wearing their hair in a large bun at the back rather than in braids. Men plucked all body hair and that of the head except for one tuft which was allowed to grow long (Smith, p. 137; Harrington, 1913, p. 220; Pastorius, 1700, p. 384; Lindstrom, pp. 195 and 200). Men were
301 permitted to tattoo themselves as marks of distinction, the designs
304 suggesting the deed which they commemorated. The operation was performed by breaking the skin in the desired pattern with a flint knife or sharp fish tooth. When the blood had been drawn, a powder of burned poplar bark was laid in the wound. Apparently the tattoo lasted a lifetime (Heckewelder, 1881, p. 206).

291 Children were allowed to go about with little or no clothing until
302 eight or ten years of age, being protected from the sun by a liberal coating of bear grease (Johnson, p. 280; Pastorius, 1700, p. 384).

Family Organization and Customs

843 Starting at the beginning of life, we find that the birth process was accompanied by certain special customs. Penn says that "...when with Child, they [the women] know their Husbands no more, till delivered..." (Penn, p. 33). Harrington tells us that a prospective father who had bad luck at hunting attributed it to the spirit of his child playing about and scaring the game away. He would accordingly wear a miniature bow and arrow to keep the child's spirit amused while he hunted, or if this did not work he would try a small mortar and pestle assuming that the baby was a girl (1913, p. 212).

844 Birth itself occurred in the small hut which was also used during
[841] menstrual periods. The child was immediately immersed in water, then wrapped in a skin and bound to a cradle board. This was softened with a moss covering and had curved side pieces. The child stayed in the
854 cradleboard most of the time until it could walk (Pastorius, 1698,
482 p.434; Penn, pp.29-30; Lindstrom, p.201). Then, when it had to be carried, it was placed in a blanket and carried on the mother's back (Lindstrom, p.201).

861 Almost all of the writers were impressed with the quiet and respectful behavior of Delaware children. Only later writers, however, had much to say about the means used to educate them. These writers noted that children, especially the boys, seldom were punished (Brickell, p.47; Zeisberger, 1870, p.86). Brickell, who was brought up by a Delaware family, says that honesty, bravery and hospitality were cardinal virtues with them and that much of the training received was directed toward developing these virtues (pp.47-48). Also, of course, boys were taught woodcraft, fishing
[866] and hunting, and girls were taught the household duties including the care of the younger children.

7:Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

construct likenesses of the human figure. This belief is illus- 778
trated in the rite of the Doll Dance. When figures of corn-
husk are to be made they should be made by a person born
in summer, the season of growing corn, such an individual
being known as *si·'kwan mi·'mqs*, "spring child." Persons, 778
however, who are born in winter may make toys in the image 821
of the emblem of their ceremonial group, though to do so is
apt to bring on cold weather. It is believed that such action
is apt to anger the spirit controlling the winter, namely,
Lowane'ke's, "Winter Spirit." As an example of the opera-
tion of privilege and restriction in such matters we have the
case of a person of the Turkey group born in winter, who
could make the image of a turkey, chicken, duck or goose
out of cornstalks or cornhusks decorating it in correspondence
with its nature as a bird by attaching feathers to it. This
may be suspended in the dwelling by means of a string so
that the wind will blow the image about. Those who observe
it would remark, "Oh, you are trying to break the weather."
In short, those born in summer can only exert influence [844]
through the making of images upon the creatures of the
summer, for winter-born persons to make them is pernicious.

DICE AND BOWL GAME

Mama'n'di·n, "Gathering Dice Together." — Another 525
amusement which among the Delawares took on the sig-
nificance of a minor ceremony, was the game in which a
wooden bowl and seven dice cut out of bone, mussel shells
or peach seeds to produce outlines of turtles, horses' heads,
one side in natural color, the other stained black, and
other forms not well remembered as to detail. For some
reason the Delawares have abandoned this pastime, although
it has continued strongly among tribes whose native culture
has become more thoroughly disintegrated. Even the details
of the counting have been forgotten. Men and women in-
dulged in the Dice and Bowl game for the purpose of wagering,
the stakes being placed at one side before the opening of the
game. The players sat in a circle around the bowl which
rested on a folded blanket, each taking his turn by lifting the
bowl off the blanket and bringing it down violently to cause

7: Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

525 money, or as a minor stake the penalty is to cut wood for the owner of the house where it is played or for the winner, or to go on an errand, or to butcher a hog for him the next day, as the case may be.

[8+4 777 821] This game has its limitations of performance inasmuch as it is proper only for those born in winter to engage in it and it is only played in the winter time, with the result that it brings on storms of sleet and blizzards. For these preferences to be violated would bring on bad luck.

The markings on the straws valued from 5 to 75, are indicated in the accompanying sketch.

7:Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

of his masters. Two young men take him into a canoe, 727
seizing him by the wrists, plunging him over head and ears 783
under the water and holding him down until he was almost smothered before letting him get breath. After repeating this treatment several times they took him out, dressed him in a ruffed shirt, shaved his head, provided him with a "roach," painted him, and told him he was then an Indian. Later his Indian "uncle" would waken him at daylight and make him sit down in the creek up to his chin. This was to make him hardy. He was, moreover, not allowed to go near the fire until he became dry.[7]

They followed the habit of securing a prosperous future 834
for the young hunter by placing his umbilicus in the tracks 789
of a deer, a magical observance based on a widespread native concept of spiritual sympathy. Again, the umbilicus would be placed in the water to cause the growing youth to acquire power as a swimmer.

THE CONSANGUINITY OF TRIBES

The Delawares, like other eastern peoples,[8] consider them- 619
selves to stand in certain genealogical relationships with 648
neighboring tribes, as though they all constituted a great family,—some members older, some younger, lineal and collateral, and some in between as respects age and maturity. These relationships function in ceremonial gatherings wherein other tribes are concerned, and they are accepted without dispute among themselves. In the older accounts much stress was laid upon this feature of native life, and it seemed to form an important consideration in treaty negotiations that took place among the eastern and central tribes, giving precedence in authority to certain ones over others. From various sources we learn that the Delawares held a position of seniority among them. This fact may develop into one of some value in coördinating the position of the different groups and perhaps in throwing light on the historical sequence

[7] Loudon, *op. cit.*, pp. 260–261.

[8] The Wabanaki peoples, for instance, entertain a similar concept of tribal consanquinity, in which system they consider the Ottawa to be their grandfathers and among themselves the Micmac as their younger brothers (F. G. Speck, The Eastern Algonkian Confederacy, American Anthropologist, vol. 17, no. 3, 1915, pp. 490, 505).

8: Lindeström T-5 (1654-1655) 1925
NM7 Delaware NM7

585 a period of about that length is designated, dur-
292 ing which she must go the whole time in her bridal
308 attire, completely covered with their money, strung into the form of all kinds of figures, with which the ears, the arms and the body, down to the knees, are ornamented; with oiled hair, and face painted with all kinds of colors like a fearful scare-crow face.[4] Then she is decorated in the very best manner according to their views. Now when this said period is over then there is an end to their bridal ceremony.

824 When the savage females bear their children,
825 they tie around their waists a snake skin of the most poisonous kind of snakes, which are found in New Sweden and are called rattlesnakes, which has such an effect that they do not know of the least pain in their child birth, and are as healthy in an hour, as if they had never been through it.[5]

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[4] *Skrâdbukansichte (Skrâpukansigte)*, mask, scarecrow. 'The Indians carry small bags of paint with them, keeping the colors separate as red, blue, green, brown, white, black, yellow. They esteem brilliant colors most, which shine like pure metal.' Van der Donck, *N. Y. Col.*, 2, I, 161–2, 163–4; cf. also, *N. Y. Col.*, 2, II, 289, De Vries, *N. Y. Col.*, 2, III, 106.

[5] It is the opinion of some medical men that the reports about the easy childbirth of primitive women are more or less fictitious; but that is probably not the case. Dr. Mjöberg, a Swedish explorer, relates that he saw women who bore children on the march and continued their journey without interruption.